

EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

SUPPORT THE HOPE FOR CHILDREN ACT

HON. TOM BLILEY

OF VIRGINIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 1999

Mr. BLILEY. Mr. Speaker, recently I received a letter from one of my constituents, Mr. Scott Thompson of Richmond, Virginia. Mr. Thompson and his wife are in the process of adopting a child and I was struck by what he was willing to go through to give a child a loving home.

Mr. Thompson writes:

To give some background, my wife and I have been going through the adoption process for about two years. During that time we have pursued many different paths and options, all unsuccessful, so far. As it stands now we are about six months from getting our child, hopefully. We have invested to date, roughly \$6,000. We will surely invest another \$10,000 before it is all over . . . It is, however, very sad that two people who wish to provide a loving and stable home to a child must endure . . . outrageous costs as well. In our case we will have to obtain a second mortgage on our home and use all of our savings to make this a reality. These payments will make it more difficult for us to give all that we want to our child. Passage of this bill will cost the Federal Government so little in the grant scheme of things. It will, however, provide much needed help to the searching families and the waiting children.

Mr. Speaker, as Mr. Thompson's letter indicates, the cost of adopting a child continues to go up. Many parents who want to give a child a loving home cannot because of the huge expense of doing so. Adopting a child can cost a family thousands of dollars; more than most families can handle. Today, I reintroduce the Hope for Children Act to help ease the financial burden on those who want to give a child a loving home.

The Hope for Children Act would increase the adopting tax credit for each adoption to \$10,000 and make the process more affordable for middle-class families. Present law only provides a \$5,000 tax credit per adoption and a \$6,000 tax credit for the adoption of special needs children. The current tax credit is far below the actual cost of adopting a child. Furthermore, the Hope for Children Act would index the credit for inflation and increase the earnings limit, expanding eligibility for the tax credit. The Hope for Children Act would also make the adoption tax credit permanent law, repealing the sunset, and exempt the beneficiaries of the credit from the Alternative Minimum Tax. This will ensure that parents receive the full benefit of this credit.

Mr. Speaker, my wife and I are adoptive parents. The Hope for Children Act will allow more families and children to experience the happiness my family has enjoyed. Most important, more children will have someone to call 'Mom and Dad' if the Hope for Children Act becomes law. With the average adoption costing between \$8,000–\$25,000, we need to do

more to promote adoption. The Hope for Children Act will make it possible for more children without homes to join loving families. The Hope for Children Act can make dreams come true for many people.

Today, thousands of children are without permanent families—it is time we all work together to fix this problem. We owe it to those children to put aside political differences and pass pro-adoption legislation this year.

IN HONOR OF THE NATIONAL APPRECIATION DAY FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 1999

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in honor of the National Appreciation Day For Catholic Schools. As a former Catholic school student, I know first hand the value of a Catholic education. Catholic schools teach students discipline, pride, and respect for learning.

I especially wish to recognize the delegation of students, teachers, and parents that make the National Appreciation Day For Catholic Schools a special day, they also know the value of Catholic schools. Their commitment to ensuring an exceptional Catholic education and maintaining quality Catholic schools means that Catholic students in the future will continue to benefit from outstanding educational opportunities.

I would also like to recognize the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) for their efforts to promote educational and catechetical goals. By sponsoring events like the Seton Awards, which recognize individuals who have made outstanding contributions to Catholic education, the NCEA works diligently to insure better education across America.

Providing excellent educational opportunities for all children is one of the most important goals in our society. I am encouraged by the involvement of the students, teachers, and parents who are observing the National Appreciation Day For Catholic Schools.

SOCIAL SECURITY EARNINGS LIMIT ELIMINATION ACT

HON. BENJAMIN A. GILMAN

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 1999

Mr. GILMAN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce H.R. 519, the Social Security Earnings Limit Elimination Act of 1999. I invite my colleagues to join me in supporting this worthwhile piece of legislation.

The objective of this bill, H.R. 519, is simple and straightforward: It would fully remove in the future the limitations on the amount of out-

side income which working seniors who are receiving Social Security may earn while receiving benefits.

For too many years, those senior citizens, aged 65 to 69, who chose to continue to work have had their Social Security benefits deducted dollar for dollar once their earnings went over \$12,500 annually.

The 104th Congress made a much-needed change, raising the outside earnings limit to \$30,000 by the year 2002.

I believe that while this is a good step forward, more needs to be done on this issue. The earnings limit only serves to discourage many seniors from working and diminishes their potential impact on society. It is a condescending regulation that conveys the message that seniors have nothing to contribute and discourages them from serving in the work force.

I was pleased to hear the President, in his State of the Union Address, calling for the elimination of the earnings limit.

Accordingly, I invite my colleagues to join in supporting this timely and important legislation.

IN MEMORY OF JUDGE JOSEPH EDWARD STEVENS, JR.

HON. IKE SKELTON

OF MISSOURI

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, February 3, 1999

Mr. SKELTON. Mr. Speaker, it is with deep sadness that I inform the House of the death of Judge Joseph Edward Stevens of Kansas City, MO. Judge Stevens was an honorable adversary in the courtroom, an outstanding jurist, and a warm and thoughtful friend.

Judge Stevens was born in Kansas City, attended Southwest High School, Yale University and Michigan Law School. He served as a Lieutenant in the Navy from 1952–1955. Before entering the Navy, he was a research assistant to Charles Whitaker. He was an attorney with Lombardi, McLean, Slagle and Bernard and then with Lathrop, Koontz, Righter, Blackwell, Gordon and Parker from 1956–1981. He was appointed by President Reagan in 1981 to the United States District Court for the Western District of Missouri and served actively until his death, presiding over some of the highest-profile cases in recent Kansas City history.

Judge Stevens taught at the Law Schools of the University of Missouri at Columbia and University of Missouri at Kansas City. He served from 1974 to 1982 as a member of the Board of Governors of the Missouri Bar and was president of the Missouri Bar from 1980 to 1981. He was appointed by President Clinton and confirmed by the Senate on April 6, 1995 as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Harry S. Truman Scholarship Foundation, serving as president from 1997 to the present. He was a former member of the House of Delegates of the American Bar Association and of the Advisory Board of the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).

• This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.

Matter set in this typeface indicates words inserted or appended, rather than spoken, by a Member of the House on the floor.